



MASSACHUSETTS

# Workforce Investment Act

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**WIA Communication No. 03-17**

☐ Policy   ☒ Information

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**To:** Chief Elected Officials  
Workforce Investment Board Chairs  
Workforce Investment Board Directors  
Title I Administrators  
Career Center Directors  
Title I Fiscal Officers  
DET Regional Directors  
DET Area Directors

**cc:** Judy Gill, Board of Higher Education  
Jack King, Director, Division of Employment and Training  
Jonathan Raymond, President of Commonwealth Corporation  
John Wagner, Department of Transitional Assistance

**From:** Jane Edmonds, Director, Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Bob Bickerton, Director of the Adult and Community Learning Services,  
Department of Education

**Date:** August 26, 2003

**Subject:** **Background and Update on SMARTT/MOSES Integration**

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**Background:** In an effort to enhance and improve the workforce development system in Massachusetts, the State embarked on an overarching initiative to better understand the performance of the workforce development system<sup>1</sup>. As part of this initiative, workforce development partners identified the need for a **set of tools and processes** to document the impact of adult education and workforce development services administered by the Commonwealth.

A first step in achieving this goal was the development of a new **technology tool to exchange information on One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) customers and Adult Basic Education (ABE) students** currently maintained in separate data systems. Workforce development partners focused their efforts and resources on a project to link the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment

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<sup>1</sup> Workforce development partners signed an Agreement between the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Commonwealth Corporation, the Division of Employment and Training, the Department of Education, the Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Board of Higher Education to develop a set of *Core Performance Measures* for the workforce development system.

System (MOSES), managed by the Division of Employment and Training (DET), and the System for Managing Accountability and Results through Technology (SMARTT) system managed by the Adult & Community Learning Services Unit of the Department of Education.

The SMARTT/MOSES Interface is a new tool to exchange student/customer information between the SMARTT and MOSES software systems. The ultimate goal for development of the Interface is to improve the workforce development system's capacity to better coordinate services, referrals and basic information for OSCC customers and students. The Adult & Community Learning Services Unit of the Department of Education (ACLS/DOE) and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Division of Employment and Training (DET) worked jointly on the project. DET, in consultation with ACLS, applied for and received a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and contracted with Deloitte Consulting to design and develop the Interface.

The SMARTT/MOSES Interface will directly impact service delivery at One-Stop Career Centers and ABE providers that have access to MOSES and SMARTT, respectively. The SMARTT/MOSES Interface is an electronic referral system that shares demographic, occupational and educational information between both systems. The goals of the SMARTT/MOSES Interface are:

- (1) to reduce the frequency of data entry on one individual as required by State management information systems;
- (2) to connect related information about the same individual that is housed in two separate systems so that the service providers with access to this information can better understand a person's background and service needs;
- (3) to improve the ability of OSCCs to quickly and accurately refer customers to ABE programs and maximize a person's access to adult education or ESOL, and;
- (4) to improve the ability of ABE providers to access information from the One-Stop Career Center and build referral mechanisms for students who may need assistance in seeking employment.

Data collection began in July; all customer/student information entered after July 1, 2003 populates the SMARTT/MOSES systems. Information is shared by both systems ONLY IF a student or OSCC customer signs a DOE Release Form (available in both SMARTT and MOSES) stating their permission to share their information. The use of a DOE Release Form is described further on in this WIA communication.

This SMARTT/MOSES Interface will yield many exciting results. In general, the SMARTT/MOSES Interface will improve the overall ability of One-Stop Career Centers and ABE providers to work together in their regions by giving them more familiarity with customer information. Specifically, the end users of MOSES (Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Centers) and SMARTT (ABE providers) will realize significant benefits from the ability to share customer information using the SMARTT/MOSES Interface. These benefits are described in detail in the next section.

## Impact on Operations at the Local Level

### Referral and Intake Processes

This new technological capacity will have an impact on the relationship between One-Stop Career Centers and ABE providers, which is described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the MA Department of Education and each Local Workforce Investment Board on behalf of One-Stop Career Centers in their region. Data sharing and electronic referral processes between One-Stop Career Centers and ABE providers allow each region to make the following improvements to interconnected referral and intake processes across both systems

- **Increased Professional Capacity for OSCC Staff:** The MA Department of Education will provide training to OSCC staff on SMARTT and COGNOS – the web based data management system that complements SMARTT – and the ability to link to SMARTT in MOSES.
- **Streamlined Intake Process:** Customers referred from a Career Center to an ABE program, and vice versa, will not need to complete another set of intake forms. If Career Center staff administer the approved DOE assessment tests, customers will not need to repeat the tests at the ABE site (and vice versa).
- **More Efficient Connection to ABE/ESOL Classes for OSCC Customers:** The SMARTT/MOSES Interface allows staff at OSCCs to input assessment scores for individuals through MOSES to make a referral to an ABE program and find available openings in classes by accessing the class schedules and enrollment information through the DOE web site. In addition, OSCCs utilizing DOE-approved assessment tools will have more detailed information on a customer's skill levels through their TABE scores and can therefore increase the referral options for the customer, which may result in faster placement.
- **More Accurate Referrals to ABE/ESOL Classes:** If Career Center staff administer the ACLS/DOE approved basic skills assessment test (TABE tests long form 7, 8), customers who are assessed at the career center for basic skills will have more accurate scores and can be placed in classes accordingly. In addition, OSCC customers referred to ABE programs in the area will then have completed the first major step to enrollment – academic skill assessment using approved tools. In cases where ABE providers are co-located at One-Stop Career Centers, access to customer scores on DOE-approved assessments will facilitate a deeper discussion on referral options as they contact area ABE programs to secure placements for customers in ABE classes.
- **Streamlined Reporting to Adult & Community Learning Services by OSCCs:** The SMARTT/MOSE link will allow One-Stop Career Centers to generate electronic reports on the number of ABE referrals transacted (as required by their contract with DOE/ACLS) through the data system. No manual collection of data will be required.
- **Easy Electronic Access to Customer History:** For any customer seeking assistance at a career center, the SMARTT/MOSES Interface will provide information to Career Center staff on that individual's history within the ABE system.
- **Electronic Referrals:** Career Center staff will be able to receive electronic referrals from the ABE program partners. To complement the electronic referrals, the system will generate a

hard copy of a referral form that the customer/student can take with them as they pursue services at the ABE program.

- **Increased Follow Up on Referrals:** Referrals to ABE programs are documented so OSCC staff or ABE staff can follow up on a referral flagged in the data system. Without formal documentation, follow-up cannot occur. ABE candidates require more attention, persistence and concrete methods to reinforce conversations.
- **Increased Tracking of Successful ABE Referrals:** Career Center staff who refer a customer to ABE programs will be able to identify his/her enrollment status by utilizing the data system. Previously, they had to contact either the customer or the ABE programs.

### **Release Forms**

Information and data for a customer or ABE student may only be shared between SMARTT and MOSES if the person completes a DOE Release Form to give their written permission. Both SMARTT and MOSES have a check-off box to indicate the person's agreement to release their information to the other system. A copy of a DOE Release Form as agreed upon by ACLS/DOE, DLWD and DET is attached.

The new capacity tool for the workforce development system raises several long term policy issues. *DLWD intends to honor the standards set by the Department of Education (DOE) on basic skills assessment tools and work with the local workforce areas to implement these standards.*

### **Next Steps**

**More Information:** DLWD will issue an informational WIA Communication on the standards set by DOE with regard to use of basic skills assessment tools, the results of a survey of current methods used by OSCCs to assess basic skills, and the potential implications for the Career Centers with adoption of DOE's standard. In addition, there are potential capacity building opportunities for OSCC staff regarding the administration of TABE testing and related data systems.

**Policy Development:** DLWD will work with the Adult and Community Learning Services and the local level partners to set policy on skill assessments and scoring issues going forward to design an implementation strategy based on input from the regional partners.

We will initiate our first discussion on this topic at the September 10, 2003 Operator's Meeting.

**Inquiries:** Questions related to this issuance should be directed to either Marilyn Boyle at 617-626-5721 or Jennifer James at 617-727-6573 x124.

**Filing:** Please file this in your notebook of previously issued WIA Communication Series Issuances as #03-17.



# ***The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education***

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## **Release of Information Form**

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, am enrolled in one or more of the following programs that use state or federal funding provided by the State of Massachusetts (please check all that apply):

- ☐ An adult basic education program (DOE funded)
- ☐ A job training program (state approved)
- ☐ Employment Services at a One Stop Career Center or Division of Employment and Training.
- ☐ Post-Secondary Education Program – (MA college or university)

I understand that these programs work closely together and that they will share information to improve and coordinate services to people who are enrolled in these programs. I understand that my records may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the State and Federally supported education, employment, and training programs.

By signing this form, I give permission to my program to share my records, which may include my name, social security number, address, phone number, educational/career goals for participating in this program, test scores, employment history, and wage information with the other programs listed above. I understand that my information will be kept strictly confidential by these programs and may not be shared with any person or organization not employed or funded by one of the above listed programs.

I am signing this form because I agree that my records can be shared with the programs listed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Staff

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date